

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY BONN

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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TAGS: SCUL

SUBJECT: US-EC CULTURAL INITIATIVE

REF: STATE 246586

1. WE WELCOME DEPARTMENT'S PROPOSAL AND BELIEVE ITS IMPLEMENTATION WOULD CONSTITUTE MOST USEFUL CONTRIBUTION TO REMEDYING CURRENT TRANSATLANTIC MALAISE. WE ESTIMATE, HOWEVER, THAT IT WILL REQUIRE SUBTLE, SKILLFUL PRESENTATION TO GET EUROPEANS TO ACCEPT PROPOSAL.

2. MOST NATURAL EUROPEAN PARTNER FOR US IN CULTURAL CONFERENCE IS COUNCIL OF EUROPE; BUT CHOOSING THIS PARTNER WOULD LEAD US NOWHERE POLITICALLY. NATO ALREADY HAS COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND CULTURAL RELATIONS; BUT CICR ACTIVITY IS NARROW AND WE DO NOT THINK NATO SPONSORSHIP WOULD BE OF PARTICULAR HELP IN REACHING AUDIENCES AND OBJECTIVES OF A CULCON.

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3. AMONG THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT HAS TAKEN THE LEAD IN URGING THE COMMISSION TO DEVELOP REVERSE LEADER PROGRAM TO ACQUAINT AMERICAN PRESENT AND POTENTIAL OPINION LEADERS WITH AIMS AND WORKINGS OF EC (SEE EC A-51 AND EC A-419, PAGE 2). SOME MEMBERS OF EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT THINK IN LARGE TERMS AND WOULD PROBABLY TAKE UP CULCON IDEA ENTHUSIASTICALLY.

4. EUROPEAN COMMISSION OFFICIALS IN PRESS AND INFORMATION DIRECTORATE GENERAL PROBABLY WOULD BE WILLING TO GO ALONG WITH EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT INITIATIVE OR INITIATIVE FROM ONE OR MORE MEMBER GOVERNMENTS. SPEED AND AMPLITUDE OF COMMISSION OFFICIALS' RESPONSE, HOWEVER, WOULD DEPEND ON SOLVING THREE PROBLEMS.

A. THE COMMISSION HAS NO CLEAR AUTHORITY TO ENGAGE IN EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES WITH NON-EC PARTIES. IN PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS OF JURIDICAL BASIS FOR ITS SMALL EXCHANGES PROGRAMS, COMMISSION OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD US COMMISSION IS SIMILAR TO PUBLIC CORPORATION. AS SUCH, IT HAS RIGHT TO PUBLICIZE COMMISSION ACTIVITIES AND EUROPEAN COMMUNITY POLICIES. THESE OFFICIALS SEE THEIR REVERSE LEADER AND OTHER EXCHANGE PROGRAMS AS INFORMATION MEDIA TO REACH PEOPLE OUTSIDE OF EC MEMBER COUNTRIES. BOTTOM LINE IN THESE DISCUSSIONS IS COMMISSION OFFICIALS' STATEMENT THAT, "AFTER ALL, THESE THINGS ARE POLITICAL, SO WE CANNOT REALLY POINT TO ANY SPECIFIC PARAGRAPH IN THE EUROPEAN TREATIES WHICH AUTHORIZES THEM." FOR PURPOSES OF CULCON, WE CAN EXPECT COMMISSION TO GO ONLY SO FAR AS THEY DETECT MEMBER STATES' POLITICAL DESIRE TO GO.

B. COMMISSION HAS NO BUDGET FOR CULCON-TYPE ACTIVITIES. AGAIN, THIS IS REALLY A POLITICAL PROBLEM.

C. COMMISSION LACKS EXPERIENCED STAFF IN CULCON AREA. IT IS LOOKING NOW FOR OUTSIDE EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION WHICH COULD ADMINISTER REVERSE LEADER PROGRAM, MUCH AS GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS INSTITUTE WORKS FOR DEPARTMENT OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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STATE. COMMISSION OFFICIALS HOPE THEREBY NOT ONLY TO SHIFT BURDEN OF LOGISTICS, BUT ALSO TO SHIFT LOCUS OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR RESPONDING TO NATIONAL MEMBER GOVERNMENTS' PRESSURES IT EXPECTS CONCERNING IMPLEMENTATION OF REVERSE LEADER PROGRAM OF ANY SIGNIFICANT SIZE.

5. WE APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S SENSITIVITY TO LIKELIHOOD THAT INSTITUTION OF US-GERMAN CULCON MIGHT LEAD OTHER EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS TO REQUEST THEIR OWN

CULCONS. WE SUSPECT THAT US INITIATIVE FOR
US-EC CULCON MIGHT LEAD SOME EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS
TO FEEL US TRYING TO ORGANIZE EUROPEAN UNITY IN ITS
OWN WAY AND SUPPLANT BILATERAL CHANNELS MUCH MORE
SUBJECT TO EACH EUROPEAN GOVERNMENT'S CONTROL.

6. OF ALL EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS, GERMAN IS PROBABLY
THE ONE WHICH WOULD BE BOTH MOST RECEPTIVE TO
EUROPEANIZING TRANSATLANTIC CULTURAL EXCHANGES
AND MOST ABLE TO PUSH IDEA ON OTHER EC MEMBERS AND
ON THE COMMISSION. (GERMANY WILL BE IN THE CHAIR OF
THE EC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS BEGINNING JANUARY 1).
WE THEREFORE SUGGEST THAT, IF EMBASSY BONN CONCURS,
DEPARTMENT USE OCCASION OF JANUARY 10-11 BONN TALKS
TO GET GERMANS TO TAKE INITIATIVE FOR US-EC CULCON.
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